

If Life is a Series of Projects, What Are You Doing to Succeed?

By Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, Chief Cheetah, Cheetah Learning

We're All in This Together

Project Management is one thing we all have in common. Every person and every organization does projects. When you come right down to it, life is just a series of projects. From selecting a college and applying to it, to getting the grade you need on your class projects, to successfully studying for exams and – finally – graduation. Each of these events is a project that you have to manage.

After college, you get a job and that, too, becomes a project. Then, if you choose to look for someone to spend your life with – that's a big project. From there, the project list goes on: Buying your first home, managing that home, and managing change as your life continues to evolve. Sound familiar?

For organizations, projects are the life-blood that flows from department to department. Those organizations grow and succeed based on their ability to successfully complete projects. Whether it's upgrading a financial system, getting a new product to market, launching a new promotional campaign, upgrading a facility, or developing more efficient ways of operating, all of these activities require Project Management.

The Power of the PMP® Credential

As we all know from experience, some projects fail and some succeed. So, how can you make sure you're on the winning side? Getting certified as a Project Management Professional (PMP) is one way to stack the odds in your favor. When you improve your ability to manage projects, you can achieve more personal success and help your organization become more successful as well. And success is infectious on teams. When people become better at doing projects, they inherently raise the capability of everyone else around them as they step into leadership and mentoring roles.

A Solid Foundation

The PMP certification is more than those three letters. It's a solid foundation of knowledge that helps people and organizations improve the way they do projects. It gives people a common base of knowledge to build on together, creating a unity that can't be underestimated when a team works together from the same starting point.

Understanding How People Learn

An important part of successful Project Management involves understanding how people learn. People develop capabilities through four levels of learning: awareness, knowledge, skills, and mastery.

Awareness

In order for learning to occur, people must first become aware that they need to further develop their capabilities in a specific area. This awareness drives the desire to learn more about a particular subject matter. For instance, a project manager who consistently finishes projects late and over-budget may realize that he needs to learn how to manage his project team better. With this awareness, he can now determine how to improve in this area.

Knowledge

Once people are aware that they can develop their capabilities and become more successful, then they need to create a foundation of knowledge upon which to improve. Pursuing the PMP certification helps people develop that critical base of knowledge to improve their Project Management capabilities. With the PMP credential, people develop more self-confidence to learn and apply new skills in their day-to-day work, ultimately achieving a much higher level of success with their projects.

Skills & Mastery

With more success comes more skill, and with the consistent application of skills, eventually there is mastery. Mastery is the highest level of learning, where people have consistent outcomes whenever they apply their skills.

How important is Project Management and your mastery of it? Consider this: In its 2003 CHAOS Chronicles Report, the Standish Group reported that the lost dollar value for US projects in 2002 was estimated at \$38 billion with another \$17 billion in cost overruns for a total project waste of \$55 billion against \$255 billion in project spending. Without a consistent approach to Project Management, losses to the bottom-line can be significant. When you're a master of Project Management, you directly contribute to the bottom-line.

If you or your team members want to get achieve mastery in Project Management, earning the PMP credential is a great way to start building the knowledge foundation needed for individual and organizational success.

"PMP" is a registered certification mark of the Project Management Institute, Inc.

About the Know How Network

The Know How Network is a monthly column written by Michelle LaBrosse, the founder and Chief Cheetah of Cheetah Learning. Distributed to hundreds of newsletters and media outlets around the world, the Know How Network brings the promise, purpose and passion of Project Management to people everywhere.

About the Author



Michelle LaBrosse, PMP, is the founder of [Cheetah Learning](#), and [author](#) of *Cheetah Negotiation* and *Cheetah Project Management*. The Project Management Institute, www.pmi.org, recently selected Michelle as one of the 25 Most Influential Women in Project Management in the World, and only one of two women selected from the training and education industry. She was featured in the October 2006 issue of PM Network Magazine, and also graduated from the Harvard Business School's Owner President Managers (OPM) program in March 2006.

She created the origins of the Cheetah Project Management methodology as an Air Force Officer in the mid 80's. In 1995, she prototyped the concept of accelerating learning using "virtual classrooms," to accelerate the way people learned and applied core business skills. As a corporate research scientist in systems engineering and adult learning for a large multinational corporation, she later created and tested a one-day approach to teaching Project Management. This approach would later evolve to become Cheetah Project Management, a fast and effective way of launching projects.

Today, she is the leader of the course development team at Cheetah and sets the strategic direction for the company. Using the Cheetah Project Management techniques, LaBrosse has grown the company from three employees in 2000 to more than 100 in 2006. Cheetah is now the global leader in Project Manager Professional Development.

Her articles have appeared in publications such as: *European CEO Magazine*, *Plant Engineering Magazine*, *Industrial Engineer Magazine*, *Control Engineering Magazine*, *Journal of the American Association for Medical Transcription JAAMT*, *NSSEA Essentials Magazine*, *ASTN Network Magazine*, *Radio Sales Today*, *Sprinkler Quarterly & Technology Magazine*, *The Federal Credit Union Magazine Online*, *Business Quarterly Online American Society of Landscape Architects*, *ACRP Wire Association of Clinical Research Professionals*, *American Council of Engineering Companies Association* and more.

With a B.S. in Aerospace Engineering, and an M.S. in Mechanical Engineering, LaBrosse has done extensive postgraduate work with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Center for Advanced Educational Studies and with the University of Washington Industrial Engineering Program in accelerating adult learning with respect to meeting core business objectives.

She lives in Nevada with her family and likes to rejuvenate in Alaska where you'll often find her kayaking, golfing or hiking.